

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

1 Background and Rationale

The CHS physical activity section was adapted from the NCHS Health Interview Survey Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Supplement and the Paffenbarger Questionnaire. The interviewer queries the participant about 1) participation in 18 specific types of physical activity over the prior 2 weeks, 2) usual walking, stair climbing, and sitting/lying down, and 3) activity in middle-age and changes in activity in later life.

The physical activity form has several important purposes. The data collected will be used to:

- Describe patterns of physical activity in the elderly.
- Estimate energy expenditure (kcal/week) and time spent in moderate- and high-intensity physical activity of the elderly.
- Assess the role of moderate- and high-intensity regular physical activity as risk factors for cardiovascular disease in the elderly.
- Assess the role of walking, stair climbing, and sedentary time as risk factors for cardiovascular disease in the elderly.
- Assess the role of increasing activity in later life in the risk of cardiovascular disease in the elderly.

2 Definitions

2.1 Time frame -- questions 1-5 include physical activities the participant participated in during the two weeks prior to the interview.

2.2 Physical activity -- Movement produced by skeletal muscles that results in energy expenditure. The focus of the CHS Physical Activity Form is on activities which are repetitive (more than once every two weeks), planned, and sustained (for more than 10 minutes per occasion).

2.3 Specific types of activity -- the 18 types of activity examined in question 1 are defined according to the previously developed protocol for the Minnesota Leisure Time Activity Questionnaire.

- Walking for exercise Include only walking that is continuous for 10 or more minutes, and that is planned and sustained. Walking around the house or associated with customary performance of work is not included. Walking that takes 10 minutes or more but is NOT planned and sustained (for example,

walking to the store or bus stop, unless as part of a planned exercise routine) is NOT included.

- Moderately strenuous Include scrubbing, vacuuming, etc., if continuous for 10 or more minutes.
- Mowing the lawn Ask for average time to cut lawn with any type of lawn mower, including push, self-propelled, and riding mower. Do not include rest breaks in estimate of time spent mowing lawn.
- Raking the lawn Record the time spent raking, not including rest time.
- Gardening Include all activities needed to plant and/or maintain a garden. Ask the participant to estimate the amount of time spent in actual gardening activities, not including rest breaks.
- Hiking Record the actual time spent hiking. Do not include rest breaks.
- Jogging Ask for time spent jogging.
- Biking To work and/or for pleasure. Ask for actual riding time.
- Exercise cycle Ask for actual riding time. Include exercising on a rowing machine, stair climbing machine such as StairMaster or skiing machine such as Nordic Track.
- Dancing Ballroom and/or square dancing. Ask for time spent on dance floor.
- Aerobics/aerobic dance Actual time performing the aerobics should be recorded. This includes participation in an organized class as well as at-home aerobics (for example, along with the television or a video tape).
- Bowling Ask the participant how many games he or she bowls on an average night or occasion. Multiply the number of games times 10. The answer is the time per occasion in minutes. It is important to complete the calculation. Do not rely on the participant's estimate of time, which may include watching others bowl or other non-bowling activities.
- Golf Ask for the number of holes played. Count 1 ½ hours for every 9 holes played. As with bowling, it is important to calculate the time rather than accept the participant's estimate.
- Calisthenics/general exercise Ask what kind of exercise is done. Do not include activities listed under other codes. Ask for the time spent actually exercising.

- Swimming Include time spent actually swimming in a pool or at the beach or lake. Do not include rest time.
- Other There will be the occasional individual who has spent time on a leisure-time physical activity that is not referred to here. Ask the participant to give a name describing the activity. If the participant names one of the activities listed above, go back and record under that specific activity. Do not record as "other." Do not include non-physical activities such as playing cards, attending parties, etc.

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Methods

The CHS Physical Activity Form is administered during the Year 5 Follow-up Interview.

- Question 1 - Introductory Script: I am going to read a list of activities. Please tell me which activities you have done in the past two weeks.

Have you done this activity in the last two weeks?

- Read each activity on the list.

For each activity checked "Yes", ask the participant the following set of questions:

- How often have you done this activity in the last two weeks?

When the participant indicates they participate in the activity between 1 and 2 times per week, record the smaller of two numbers.

- What is the average amount of time that you spent per session of this activity?

Record the response in hours (00-09) and minutes (00-60)). Fill in all blank spaces.

- Over the past year, how many months did you do this activity?

Record the response in months (01-12).

Probe for other types of leisure-time physical activity not listed in question 1.

- Question 2 - Think about the walking you do outside your home. During the past week, about how many city blocks or miles did you walk?

This question includes all walking, including that done for exercise and reported on page one, and any other walking the participant does.

Record the number of blocks walked during the past week. Check blocks or miles, whichever is provided by the participant.

If the participant states that s/he did no walking outside the home, code "000." Check "no walking at all" for Question 3. Do not ask the participant Question 3.

- Question 3 - Look at this card and tell me, when you walk outside your home, what is your usual pace?

Hand the participant Card 9. Check the response.

- Question 4 - Think about how often you use stairs. Include stairs inside and outside your home, and stairs at other places. In the last week, about how many flights up stairs did you climb up?

Ask the participant how many steps are in each flight of stairs s/he climbed. If the number of steps is known, calculate the number of flights of steps. Ten steps is equal to one flight of stairs. (For example, if the participant climbed 10 flights of stairs of 5 steps each, the response on the form should be "5 flights of stairs.")

If the participant does not know how many steps s/he climbed, ask: "Is it approximately 10 steps?" Use the participant's best estimate to calculate the number of flights of steps.

- Question 5 - Look at this card and tell me, how would you describe the level of your physical activity since we saw you last year?

Hand the participant Card 10. Check the response.

- Question 6 - In a usual 24-hour period, how many hours do you spend seated or lying down? Include all time spent sleeping, resting, and lying down, and also include all time spent watching TV, eating, reading, and any other time sitting down.

Record the total number of hours the participant spent sitting or lying down each day during the last week. This includes time resting, sleeping, lying down, watching TV, eating, and any other time spent quietly sitting or lying down.